

LIA-2SR

19 AUG 1988

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19 August 1988

NOTE FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: [redacted]
Deputy Director for Requirements and Evaluation, ICS

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SUBJECT: Review of Draft Article

REFERENCE: Note for [redacted] et al, from DDCI, dtd 15 Aug 88

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1. This note responds to your request.

2. I think the draft article is outstanding and, in overview, delivers in a public text a long overdue and extremely important message. Most of these ideas apply to the origins of this "opportunity unfulfilled" and to the improvements.

3. Even so, I suggest a few ideas for you to consider for the purpose of improving the article:

- o There should be up front a one sentence summary which picks up both the title and the last paragraph's punch line. Such a sentence might be:

While there are some obvious and important reasons why the President and his intelligence components have some difficulty, the President and this nation deserve a better performance from US intelligence and can achieve it, but only when White House officers and intelligence professionals can work together.

- o With respect to origins (your pages 10-15), I would add one "new" idea and expand one of yours.

The new idea is that Presidents have very wide-ranging agendas and find intelligence not nearly so useful or relevant to their day-to-day, or longer term interests and problems, as less classified and more readily available materials. The key US and foreign newspapers and magazines do a better job on many subjects than does US intelligence. There are many examples of this and reasons for it. The idea is touched upon at the bottom of page 11, last sentence.

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The expansion is on page 14, central tic: I would expand the first sentence so that it reads (as marked) "...have great ignorance about the intelligence profession and US capabilities and therefore have unrealistic...."

- o With respect to improvements, I would add an idea, or highlight it. This thought is that US intelligence has to do a lot better at producing and delivering relevant products to senior officers. My view is that when a policy issue is coming to a head, US intelligence has to be involved and our products have to be injected into the process so they can be useful and used. The element of timing is vital. But US intelligence has to focus its resources so that when the President is ready for our help, we are there--not on call, if someone remembers to think of us.
 - o And I would add an idea, conceivably a stand-alone, separate paragraph on page 25, at the bottom. The central thought is that US intelligence can itself be better organized, and at its highest levels and on a Community-wide basis, to both help policy officials and aid the Intelligence Community in understanding what policy officials need. In fact, US intelligence is working to create exactly such a capability. This improvement will be valuable in its own right and will have particular benefit if the dialogue improves between senior policy officials and intelligence professionals.
4. And I have attached a copy of a couple of pages with several minor word fixes which you may find of use.
5. I hope this helps. If you need more, call.

Attachment:
As Stated



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a premium on the PDB -- an oft neglected opportunity -- and on the willingness of the DCI to give important assessments (published or oral) directly to the President or call them to the direct attention of the National Security Adviser.

Disinterest or reluctance on the part of a DCI to take an activist, even aggressive role in this respect is a severe -- even irreparable -- handicap to ensuring that intelligence information and assessments are made available to or read by the President and the National Security Adviser.

WHAT PRESIDENTS THINK OF WHAT THEY GET

Perhaps in recognition of how busy Presidents are, for years there has been an adage at the White House that the absence of criticism should be regarded as praise. Along these lines, Presidential comments on intelligence assessments are so rare that we are understandably tempted to assume satisfaction with what is being received. Regrettably, however, this is doubtful. Many of the infrequent comments are critical, as illustrated at the outset of this article. R I believe the negative perceptions of Intelligence of most Presidents and their advisers while in office or afterward are due to five factors:

-- The first and most significant is failure. Whether Nixon's unhappiness over misestimates of planned Soviet ICBM deployments or Carter's over failure to forecast the Iranian revolution or untimely upward revisions of North Korean troop strength, these Presidents -- with justification -- believed CIA assessments either contributed importantly to policy disasters or made them vulnerable to later criticism. Moreover, Presidents expect that for what they spend on intelligence, the end-product should be able to predict all manner of coups, upheavals, riots, intentions, military moves and the like with accuracy. Intellectually, they know most such specific events are incredibly hard to predict -- and that we are incredibly lucky when we do. Nevertheless, in the early morning hours when the National Security Adviser must repair to the President's study with the (usually) bad news about such events, the Chief Executive will not unnaturally wonder why his billions for intelligence do not spare him surprise. Further, Presidents want the kind of tactical intelligence that informs and facilitates day-to-day decisionmaking and where intelligence performance is hardest.

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information on foreign affairs and defense. The flow of information to the Hill has given the Congress a powerful tool in its quest for a greater voice in the making of foreign and defense policy vis-a-vis the Executive -- and Presidents cannot be indifferent to the fact that intelligence has provided Congress with that tool and that the White House is nearly helpless to blunt it except in very rare cases.

-- Finally, I believe Presidents and their national security teams usually have ^{great ignorance about the intelligence profession and US capabilities and how we have} unrealistic expectations of what intelligence can do for them. Given the extraordinary capabilities of US intelligence for collecting and processing information -- and the cost, the uninitiated (including Presidents) often see intelligence as a magic bullet. When they too soon learn it is not, they are inevitably disappointed. Policymakers usually learn the hard way that while intelligence can tell them a great deal, it only rarely -- and usually in crises involving military forces -- provides the kind of unambiguous and timely information that can make day-to-day decisionmaking simpler and less risky. And intelligence officers encourage such exaggerated expectations occasionally by pretending a confidence in their judgments they cannot reasonably justify and by failing to be candid about the quality

-- Finally, ground rules should be developed for the disclosure of declassified intelligence. The current lack of a systematic approach contributes to leaks; to White House suspicion of obstructionism, bureaucratic gamesmanship or pursuit of a contrary policy agenda by intelligence professionals; and concern on the part of intelligence officers over the appearance (and sometimes the reality) of politicization of intelligence by White House or other policymaker-directed declassification of information. These are not new problems, but they all have worsened over the years. All, including many in Congress, agree intelligence information undergirding policy decisions must often be made available for public education or to gain support for national security decisions. There is widespread demand for unclassified publication of intelligence assessments or research on issues of moment to the country. But who should make these decisions? This is not the place to propose solutions, but the problem exists, affects the relationship between the President and the intelligence agencies on the one hand and the Executive and Legislative on the other.

The usefulness of CIA to Presidents in that area for which CIA was primarily established -- collection, analysis and

reporting

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[reporting] of information -- for many years has often suffered because of self-imposed isolation by CIA and lack of interest, understanding and involvement by the President and his national security team. Self-promoting though true stories of extraordinary intelligence successes -- untempered by candor about problems in collection and analysis -- have in the past led to exaggerated expectations that are inevitably dashed. Lack of White House involvement has often left intelligence professionals adrift, and uncertain amid conflicting priorities and requirements, with the inevitable price in relevance and timeliness.

CIA and the Intelligence Community represent an extraordinary national asset. The rebuilding of the Community over the past decade has vastly augmented our collection and analysis capabilities and sharpened our skills. Congress has greatly enhanced its understanding of intelligence and shown a willingness to provide guidance and direction. It is time for the White House to assert its proper intelligence policy direction and guidance role and for CIA to welcome this role. Communication and dialogue on such broad matters must be improved. Only thus can intelligence and the use of it by the President be improved and the concomitant opportunity to better inform the policymaking process be seized.